

Pregnant? Don't Forget to Take Good Care of Your Teeth!

When you are pregnant, it is important that you pay close attention to your teeth and gums. Hormones associated with pregnancy can exaggerate some dental problems.



Pregnant women often develop a common gum disease called gingivitis. Gingivitis, caused by plaque that remains on the teeth, irritates the gums making them red, swollen and likely to bleed easily when you brush your teeth. During pregnancy, many women who have never experienced these symptoms may begin to develop these problems. This is called "pregnancy gingivitis." Hormonal changes during pregnancy can cause the gums to respond in an exaggerated way to plaque. It's the plaque and not the hormones causing the irritation. You can help prevent these problems by making sure to clean well along your gum line.

Preventive, emergency and routine dental procedures are all suitable during pregnancy, with some modifications and planning. Make sure you let your dentist or dental hygienist know that you are pregnant.

Oral health is an important part of maintaining good overall health. Moreover, recent research has shown that the oral health of the mother can affect the health of her baby. Some research suggests that serious gum disease, called periodontitis, is linked to premature birth and low-birth weight infants.

Steps for a Healthy Mouth

- o Brush thoroughly at least twice a day.
- o Floss at least once daily.
- o Eat a healthy and balanced diet.
- o Drink optimally fluoridated water.
- o Schedule regular dental checkups throughout your pregnancy.
- o Talk with your dentist and let him or her know:
 - ✦ if you have any changes in your oral health
 - ✦ what medications you are on
 - ✦ what month of pregnancy you are in
 - ✦ if you are having a high-risk pregnancy

